

PA 11-135

HB6498

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**APPROPRIATIONS
PART 15
4676 – 5005**

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TESTIMONY

of the

CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPALITIES

to the

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

HB6464 HB6409 SB989

HB6385 HB6431 HB6339
HB6498 HB6292

April 5, 2011

Good afternoon, on behalf of CCM -- Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities -- my name is **Art Ward, Mayor of Bristol**. Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you regarding S.B. No. 452, "An Act Concerning State Mandates".

CCM supports this bill, but urges the Committee to support meaningful relief from existing mandates THIS YEAR.

S.B. 452 would enact a statutory prohibition to against the passage of *new* unfunded state mandates without a 2/3 vote of both chambers of the General Assembly.

A statutory prohibition would (a) place the burden of proof on the State to demonstrate why a mandate is needed, and (b) present the General Assembly with the issue of municipal reimbursement up-front, as the issue of enactment is debated. The legislature, through use of a "notwithstanding clause", may avoid full or even partial reimbursement for a new or expanded mandate if there are compelling public policy reasons to do so. Still, this needed reform would require the General Assembly to inject cost-benefit analyses into debates on state mandates yet provide the State with the needed flexibility to enact truly necessary mandates.

There are over 1,200 state mandates imposed on Hometown Connecticut and their residential and business property taxpayers. Relief from current mandates is important to the recovery of municipalities during this unprecedented fiscal crisis.

Local government supports the objective of many mandates -- but opposes the State's failure to pay for them.

At a time when towns and cities are struggling mightily to continue to provide needed services to residents and businesses, immediate -- not only future -- mandates relief should be a priority.

It is estimated that this 20th century law costs small towns several thousands of dollars annually, while the costs to larger cities can be as much as hundreds of thousands of dollars per year. Times have changed, technology has changed, and so too have the habits and practices of our population. Most newspapers have recognized that their future is online. A proposal, HB6339, which would relieve municipalities of the mandate to post legal notices in newspapers, was favorably reported by the Planning and Development Committee.

- **Allow municipalities that are scheduled to conduct a property revaluation – particularly physical – in 2011 and 2012, the option to delay that revaluation for at least one year, as a reasonable response to the uncertainties of the current market. A similar option to defer was passed by the Legislature in 2009.**
- **Postpone the high school reforms passed last year (PA 10-111). PA 10-111 mandates numerous graduation and curriculum requirements. The law should be postponed until state funding can be directed to pay for these new costs. This proposal, HB 6498, has been favorably reported by the Education Committee.**
- **Amend Public Act 10-171 to clarify that wireless telecommunications companies that had been assessed by the State, but are now to be assessed by municipalities -- will continue to pay their taxes in the same year in which the property is assessed (i.e. if on 10/1/10 grand list, they pay in FY10-11). This proposal, HB 6292, was favorably reported by the Planning and Development Committee.**
- **Clarify the statutory definition of "department head" for purposes of excluding such personnel from collective bargaining.**
- **Repeal CGS 10-66c which requires school districts to pay for the costs of special education for any Charter School student who resides in the district.**
- **Repeal the statute that requires one union for the uniformed employees of municipal police departments and municipal fire departments. Present law requires rank and file employees and supervisors to be in the same union – which has a chilling effect on management authority.**
- **Establish a minimum threshold of at least 1,000 work-hours of services before part-time, temporary, or seasonal employees are eligible for unemployment benefits.**

Conclusion

Please have the courage to act this year. A statutory prohibition against unfunded state mandates – and relief from current mandates (S.B. No. 452), are sorely needed.

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REP. FLEISCHMANN: And next comes our interim State Commissioner of Education, Mr. George Coleman, to be followed by Representative David Baram.

GEORGE A. COLEMAN: Good morning. I wanted to take the opportunity to testify on at least two bills and to answer any questions that you might have on any others that you might have.

Given so much I know of your agenda has special education, I've asked my Chief of the Bureau of Special Education, Anne Louise Thompson, to support me should there be more technical questions that I might need support on.

But first, I wanted to testify relative to Bill Number 1105, and that in terms of our concerns -- excuse me -- regarding the supervision of individuals who, who, who practice applied behavioral analysis services in the context of the school, and the -- our concern and our recommendation is that individuals who practice the service, that if they are not employed by the school or under contract with the school, having credentials that are either established by the State Department of Education or the Department of Health, that in school settings those individuals practice under the supervision of a school person who has the appropriate responsibility to the school system.

This practice is consistent with the -- with the method and the accountability of other practitioners who do work on behalf of students and at the behest of schools in the school setting.

So, our issue is making sure that individuals who are acting on behalf of schools, that they do so -- if they're not employed by the

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communities had an inkling to want to do this.

There was a need for a lot of collaboration around helping to make that happen, but I think in a planful environment, I certainly would look very favorably at positing more of these in suburban communities, and particularly given the expectation that they would share that asset in a great proportion with the urban centers, but I wouldn't want to say there is not a plan. In fact, I believe that there are really, really good options in some of our urban centers, but that their challenge to overcome many of the non-educational issues in order to attract the population is greater than that of the suburban community, which is one of the reasons why even under Crandall schools, we create an extended -- or we are proposing that the Hartford, those that might be created in Hartford, might have a longer period to make their recruitment goals than what might be expected of those in the suburbs.

SENATOR SUZIO: Thank you. There is one other question if I may ask.

GEORGE A. COLEMAN: All right.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: I'd like to observe that this is the fourth time you said it was your last one, so let's --

SENATOR SUZIO: I promise, Mr. Chairman, this is my last question, if you don't mind. Okay.

Regarding Raised Bill 6498, which delays the implementation of some of the mandates in Public Act 10-111, if I'm not mistaken, that was the law that was passed that was intended to dovetail a little bit with the Race To The Top grant application and, obviously, we lost

that. One of the elements in the Race To The Top which concerned me a bit was an element called equalized distribution of teachers which provided for -- basically for school districts -- it provided for the publication of teacher performance and that it encouraged certain school districts to aggressively recruit teachers from other school districts who were the highly rated teachers.

I was concerned about that when I saw that because it seemed to me to promote competition rather than cooperation between districts. I was wondering what your professional opinion is about that element in the law.

GEORGE A. COLEMAN: That element in the Race To The Top proposal, I don't think it's in the law. My concern is I did not like to support competition. I believe that I would like to create conditions that would afford those teachers who are most qualified, those teachers who are -- have the greatest benefit of a track record of success to appreciate the opportunities to give that expertise to youngsters in communities where that might not be taken for granted.

And, I believe that it is -- that to have to a system of incentives for that to happen would not -- I could -- I would support that, but I don't like the competition; I don't like what it says about teachers who -- or the assumption even because the communications, I don't know that the assumptions are necessarily correct, but to the extent that the record can identify persons with long track records of success, that those individuals might test that success with students that are different than they have taught for most of their careers, I think that would be very both enlightening for the state,

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but also, hopefully, professionally gratifying for them, and I would encourage it.

SENATOR SUZIO: Thank you, Commissioner. Thank you for your indulgence, Mr. Chairman.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. Other questions for the Commissioner? If not, thank you, Commissioner, and I would just ask that someone from the department stay around because there will be plenty of comments on some of the bills that you've commented on, and I think it's important for the department to hear that. Thank you.

We're past the first hour for public officials, so we're going to go to our first student who's testifying, then to Representative Baram. The student is Izzy Kornman to be followed immediately by Representative David Baram.

IZZY KORNMAN: Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Izzy Kornman, and I'm a tenth grader at Hall High School in West Hartford.

I'm here to talk about why I support the sections of Bill 6499 (inaudible) on education in Connecticut public schools.

I'm also the granddaughter of two Holocaust survivors. In almost two years in public school, I have approximately five days on Holocaust education during freshman year. If Hall can teach every incoming freshman, approximately 400 'teens each year, there is no reason that anyone else should not be able to.

Between 1938 and 1945, more than six million Jews were massacred. In addition to these

getting there.

Thank you. I'll take any questions if you have them.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you, sir, very much. I appreciate it. Questions for the gentleman? Thank you.

PAUL WESSEL: Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Shana Kennedy-Salchow followed by Louis Bach.

SHANA KENNEDY-SALCHOW: My name is Shana Kennedy-Salchow, and I want to thank the members of the Education Committee for this afternoon to testify about Raised Bill 1106.

I served as co-executive director of the Connecticut Commission on Educational Achievement.

Over the course of the Commission, we constantly heard about the importance of early childhood education opportunities in closing the achievement gap; that so many students were showing up at school without the skills they needed to be successful.

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We looked into the issue and found that early childhood education existed across several state agencies, and when asked some of the most basic questions such as how many low-income kids need access to pre-K, you could get several different answers. The same was true of quality questions like do teachers have to have an Associate's degree? What do you know about quality? How do you find out about the quality of these places? Who qualified to go to these centers?

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most likely to receive less funding because of this system of masked funding.

Last, I would like to comment on Raised Bill 6498. The Commission feels strongly that the reforms in PA 10.111 need to be initiated as soon as possible; we cannot delay the main provisions of this Act. In fact, we found some of the deadlines too generous as it was currently written, such as the data system deadline or the teacher evaluation report from the Performance Evaluation Advisory Committee. With an estimated 45,000 students at the below basic level in reading and/or math, can we really afford to wait?

Furthermore, there are 20 states and D.C. now with college and career ready graduation requirements for all of their students, yet this bill proposes waiting even longer before we have the same high expectations of our students. PA 10.111 was a step in the right direction, and we don't need to go backwards.

Thank you, and I'll take any questions.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. Just an opening question on that last remark, so the cost of a biennium of implementing the secondary school reform, which I strongly support as do you, is approximately \$25 million. The Governor did not include those dollars in his budget. We didn't get them from the federal government. I know that your Commission represented a range of private sector interests and maybe even some philanthropic interests.

Are you aware of additional sources of dollars we could find to be able to enact the secondary school reform?

SHANA KENNEDY-SALCHOW: I'm not aware of additional

dollars at this point in time. I would highly recommend looking to a state like Michigan which has been, you know, in dire need of funding for -- I don't know -- at least the last ten years, and they took this on. I think that they are a place that we can look to to figure out how they did it in the constraints -- the fiscal constraints that they have, and I also think, too, that the philanthropic community would be willing to help out, you know, if we got some solid figures and had an idea of what we needed to do.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. On a related note, you testified on Raised Bill 6500, and you talked about the common chart of accounts for schools and said how critically important it was. We heard testimony from the Commissioner of Education that it would be costly both for districts and perhaps the state to get this put into place.

Do you know of states we could look to that have done this already that could provide a model?

SHANA KENNEDY-SALCHOW: You know, I actually have to think about it. I do think that Rhode Island may have that. Actually, in fact, I think Rhode Island is a great state to look to. In fact -- yeah, Rhode Island. Sorry. And actually, they just did that in this past year. It's just hitting me. Yeah, they did it in the past year, so it would be a great place to look.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. I didn't mean to make this feel like, you know, millionaire, final answer kind of thing, but Rhode Island, we will certainly look there.

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that those assessments are published and that they're used as tools for the schools of education to figure out what they need to do differently and to be held accountable for them.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Absolutely, and that's one of the reasons we have this bill before us.

Are there other questions from members of the Committee? Thank you for your time and your testimony.

SHANA KENNEDY-SALCHOW: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: We go to Louis Bach to be followed by Merrill Gay.

LOUIS BACH: Good afternoon, Representative Fleischmann, ladies and gentlemen of the Committee. Thank you for having me in today.

My name is Louis Bach. I represent the Connecticut Business and Industry Association, and following on the heels of the Commission report, as Senator Bye indicated, we -- we do support the proposed department of early childhood development that is in Senate Bill 1106.

We do believe that effective state leadership is necessary to bring about the needed reforms in early childhood education here in the state, and we are supportive of a single department. We know that that will take some time to work out the details. There are a lot of disparate interests involved, different offices and interested parties. Obviously, Connecticut school kids are the number one interested party, and I think that as I sat and listened to young Izzy's testimony here earlier, it would be great if every tenth

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grader could come and sit before your Committee and give you the same eloquent testimony, and I guess it's really possible.

I'm also here to talk a little bit about House Bill 6500. We support the need for improved assessment in mathematics for teachers seeking certification for elementary school, and we also support the uniform system of accounting. I won't rehash everything you've heard today in the interest of time.

We are also here to oppose 6498, An Act Concerning School Districts. Again, on some of the similar lines you've heard, we believe that the reforms that were passed were necessary. We are actually critical of the time they passed, and we would not like to see delay of those reforms any further.

Again, I won't rehash any of the details you've heard today, but I do appreciate your taking the time to hear my testimony, and I'd be happy to answer any questions that I might be able to.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you for your testimony and for your squeezing it down to reflect what came before you.

Questions from members of the Committee?
Senator Bye?

SENATOR BYE: Thank you, Louis, for your testimony, and it's nice to have CBA testifying in favor of the department bill as well, but I just want to take a moment to make sure you thank John (inaudible) for his service on the State Advisory Council. He's doing that free of charge and bringing his ability to bring people together around the table to start the system building as it is, and just let him

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know that his efforts are appreciated as we try to build the system. Thank you very much.

LOUIS BACH: He's very grateful for that. Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Other questions? If not, thank you very much.

LOUIS BACH: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Merrill Gay to be followed by Kachina Walsh-Weaver on Senate Bill 1103.

MERRILL GAY: Good afternoon. My name is Merrill Gay. I'm the executive director of the New Britain Early Childhood Collaborative, and I'm here to speak in favor of Senate Bill 11 -- or Raised Bill 1106.

This is about creating unified leadership and consolidating the services that are spread out among a bunch of different departments. In New Britain, we've got our human resources agency that's getting -- gets its funds to run its child care program from four different sources, each one with a different set of rules and regulations, a different set of reporting requirements, so they've got money from DSS for the state-funded center, they get money from the federal Head Start program, they get money from the state Head Start program, and they've got money from the school readiness program, and they've got to blend the funds and deal with all of the different regulations, and it means that if you've got a kid in one program where there's a requirement that parents work, if the parents lose the job, then they're trying to figure out do we have another slot we can stick him in someplace else.

What we know about child development is that when kids suffer trauma at home -- and that trauma could be parents losing their job and, therefore, losing their housing, or there are lots of things we ought to be looking at as how can we kind of protect kids from this kind of trauma, how can we figure out how to organize state services so that it's rational and good for kids as opposed to all of these different funding streams that have their own different sets of rules.

We also have local -- we have silent services where people don't talk to each other.

In New Britain, we've done a community blueprint for young children. You've heard it mentioned. There are 15 communities that have done them, and a bunch more that are still working on them. Those are really local work-arounds to the fact that we don't have a coordinated system, and while I think it's really important that we get the people on the ground who run the WIC program and all of the various other programs to talk, it would be a whole lot better if there was direction from the top, telling them this is how you're going to organize this so that it's rational for families.

Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you for that very sensible, rational testimony. Questions from members of the Committee? If not, thank you for your testimony and your good work in New Britain.

Kachina Walsh-Weaver to be followed by Jennifer Alexander.

KACHINA WALSH-WEAVER: Good afternoon, Mr.

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Chairman, and members of the Committee. A couple of (inaudible) I'm just kind of go through very quickly. For the record, Kachina Walsh-Weaver with the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities.

CCM has some significant concerns about Senate Bill 1103, which would mandate pre-kindergarten in all towns effective July 1 of this year. While certainly some additional funding is being offered in the bill, in no way would we expect that that would fully cover the large costs associated with implementing such a mandate. As we all know, many of the cost drivers for local school districts are a result of unfunded and partially funded state and federal mandates. The list of mandates is large, and it grows every year, and for those of you who have been reading our mandates report, there are a number of new unfunded mandates already being proposed this year.

Attached to this testimony and other testimony is a report that the town of Bristol -- that Bristol and Monroe have done for us on the current education mandates, and this was as of two years ago.

So, we would urge you to be very careful about imposing any new mandates no matter what the purpose of them are.

6498, Raised Bill 6498 CCM is very much in support of. It would, among other things, provide some relief for the high school (inaudible) mandate that was set forth by Public Act 10-111. As we all know, the state was hoping to get Race To The Top funds to help pay for the huge costs associated with this. The Office of Fiscal Analysis has indicated that this new mandate would cost

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local school districts an estimated \$12 to \$18 million.

In addition, Section 18 of this bill establishes a task force to examine issues related to the changes of the high school graduation requirements, and CCM hopes that if anything moves forward, that this certainly does, and that an open process and all-inclusive inclusion of the affected parties be at the table this time around.

And then lastly, we also support a number of the sections of Raised Bill 6499, An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes, which would certainly provide some mandates for relief first by providing additional information to the legislative body where arbitrators have to file their decisions there; allowing certain reporting made by local boards of education to the state be done every three years rather than every two years; and, provide some additional time for notification of non-tenured teachers.

These proposals were included in a bill last year as pushed forward by members of the education community as ways to assist in mandates and a better understanding of what's going on.

Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you for your testimony. I'll just observe that when we crafted Public Act 10-111, we had a large table with lots of people around it including public school superintendents, and virtually every party you could think of that would be aware of how high schools and middle schools work.

So that being said, we are open to continuing

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to take input, but this would not be the first time we would be getting such input.

Are there questions or comments from members of the Committee? If not, thank you for your testimony.

KACHINA WALSH-WEAVER: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Jennifer Alexander on House Bill 6500, to be followed by Matt Taylor on Senate Bill 1104.

JENNIFER ALEXANDER: Good afternoon. I'm Jen Alexander, and I'm the director of research and policy at ConnCAN. I'm here to speak about House Bill 6500 which, as you know, proposes a common chart of accounts.

We're really excited to see this. We think it's a really promising step forward. As has been mentioned, right now widely varying district practices make it nearly impossible to compare budgets and spending. So, for example, one district might classify all of their literacy specialists in central office staff, whereas another district might classify those literacy specialists as school level staff, and it's just impossible to compare how money is being allocated and spent. And, we think this kind of tool would make it more transparent, make it easier to understand, but also be able to identify efficiencies where they occur and compare spending across districts.

Right now, district officials who want to compare spending and best practices aren't able to do so because they don't have a consistent way of tracking and reporting their accounting. But, to be effective, we think that this -- we need to include a few

cases, you know, in some of these cases, our teachers will have completed sort of all of that just in another state that's not Connecticut, so in many cases, teachers are being asked to do things that are redundant to experiences they've had, so I do think there should be -- to me, it makes sense there's some room for a waiver. I agree there may be some selectivity, you know, to whom it's applied, but for teachers who truly are getting exceptional results and have completed teacher preparation elsewhere and are showing, you know, their skill as teachers in the classroom, I do feel that some form of waiver like this would be appropriate and very helpful, yes.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Any other questions? If not, thank you for your testimony and for your hard work. And, we'll hear now from Dacia Toll, and then we're going to take a prerogative of the Chair and have Rabbi Philip Lazowski follow Ms. Toll due to his time constraints, and then we'll go to Jo Ann Lutz.

DACIA TOLL: Thank you. Good afternoon, members of the Education Committee. I am -- my name is Dacia Toll, and I'm the president of Achievement First, which supports the two schools you just heard speak, Amistad and Achievement First Hartford, as well as Elm City College Prep, and Achievement First Bridgeport. Collectively, we serve 2,500 Connecticut students.

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The schools Achievement First supports are amongst less than a dozen schools in the entire state where low income minority students selected by lottery are out-performing state averages on our achievement tests, providing powerful examples, as Representative McCrory said, that

between that and compromising their retirement. Connecticut teachers are eligible for teachers' retirement board.

Finally, I'm not going to have a chance to speak to it, but I do have concerns about H.B. 6498 and the roll-back on many of the supports for high performing charters that were included in the great Race To The Top work that was done last year, and I think that we all know the academic realities, we all know that what any organization or any group in the state of Connecticut gets will be dependent on appropriations, but I would like to see us not change the regulatory flexibility that was provided.

Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you for that clear answer to that question.

Are there questions from members of the Committee? Senator Bye to be followed by Representative Lavielle.

SENATOR BYE: Can I hold on my questions for one minute and pass and come back (inaudible)?

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Representative Lavielle to be followed by Senator Bye.

REP. LAVIELLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will make every effort not to ask it, whatever it is.

Thank you for your testimony. Thank you for being here, and thank you for everything that you have done in this area. I've seen some of your work so far, and I look forward to seeing more. We're very fortunate.

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everyone is running away from the war right now in education, this would be the subject that we should -- it's absolutely unconscionable to think that we don't teach history without teaching this greatest aspect of the Second World War beyond even a war situation, but also about a human experience.

I must tell you that my concern is, like you, that there even are individuals today that may not accept the fact that something like this could have conceivably happen, and that's my worry, that with time there would be more and more attitude to not consider that this event actually occurred.

So, thank you for that. Much appreciated.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you for that comment, Senator. Other questions? Hearing none, thank you, Rabbi, for your time and your testimony.

PHILIP LAZOWSKI: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Next up is Mary Loftus Levine, and then following her again, utilizing the discretion of the Chairs, we'll hear from Dr. Joe Olzacki, who I understand has a class he must teach shortly.

MARY LOFTUS LEVINE: Good afternoon, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee. I'm Mary Loftus Levine. As you probably know by now, I'm the director of policy and professional practice for the Connecticut Education Association representing 40,000 educators in our strong public schools.

We've been working collaboratively -- you have my testimony. I'm going to summarize quickly.

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think you can have it both ways and have high standards for some and not for all.

So, on behalf of our most vulnerable children, we ask that you have an equitable, fair system to certify educators in this state.

We're also here to comment on House Bill 6498, which also attempts to undo -- oh, by the way. Last year's Public Act 10-111 did lower the standards and allow new standards for administrators, a lot of opportunity to allow people to come into administrative and teacher positions from other states, and that was all negotiated, as Representative Fleischmann mentioned, with a massive group of people.

We also oppose the ability to opt out of the teacher retirement system because one isn't certified, particularly for charter school people it seems, and that also was corrected last year in the omnibus education reform act, so we'd like to let that work, and that's our comments.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. First, there's something in your statement that confused me. You talked about not having a standard based on subject area expertise, and that's not what was discussed or contemplated in this bill.

This bill talks about teacher effectiveness, so could you just explain to me why --

MARY LOFTUS LEVINE: I don't know how you define effectiveness -- how one would define effectiveness.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Well, I think --

MARY LOFTUS LEVINE: That would open up a huge definition because you would have some

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all, that teachers receiving this information with time constraints. In fact, many, many years ago, those of us who were around -- maybe 40 years ago, 30 years ago -- it used to be March 1st, and now it was moved some time ago to April 1st.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Right. Well, okay. I mean, I'll be glad to check in with the department, but they had a sense that it would be easier if we could make that last change.

And then finally you raised questions about FERPA, a section I thought was pretty innocuous. I mean, don't superintendents and -- or their designees who are part of a school system, aren't they automatically folks who are covered by FERPA and who adhere to its tenets pursuant to their job?

VINCENT J. LOFFREDO: The way this is written, it goes beyond local superintendencies' responsibilities. The way that is written, it appears to us that a superintendent in Town A can access information in Town X, Y or Z, and that may be a problem.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Okay. I'm not sure that that was the intention, but we'll discuss that. Thank you.

VINCENT J. LOFFREDO: Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Questions anyone? Thank you very much.

Kim Yannon to be followed by Alex Johnston.

KIM YANNON: Good evening, Senator Stillman, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Kim Yannon. I'm a music educator in the town of Cheshire. I'm also president of

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Connecticut Music Educators Association, and I'm here to speak on behalf of our membership of approximately 1,350 music educators in the state to H.B. 6498, specifically the proposal to repeat Section 7, subsection (c) of the General Statutes concerning implementation of high school reform requirements for graduation and the proposed delay for said implementation until 2020.

I first would like to take this opportunity to thank those on this Committee who are responsible for recognizing the importance of arts education in creating informed, capable, 21st century thinkers who are prepared for the challenges of higher education in the modern work force and creating and supporting a high school reform matrix which includes a dedicated one credit requirement in the fine arts.

One of my new favorite authors is Daniel Pink, and one of my favorite quotes from his book, *A Whole New Mind*, says that the last few decades have belonged to a certain kind of person with a certain kind of mind -- computer programmers, lawyers, MBA's -- but the keys to the kingdom are changing hands; the future belongs to a very different kind of person with a very different kind of mind -- creators and empathizers, pattern recognizers and meaning makers; these people -- artists, inventors, designers -- will now reap society's biggest rewards and share its greatest joys.

Those of us who are in education and those of us who are responsible for steering education policy at the state level must be informed as to the role that arts education plays in our students' development and the unique position that arts education is in right now to deliver

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instruction in 21st century skills.

Creativity, big picture thinking, pattern recognition, meaning making, are all hallmarks of arts education and are now widely recognized as crucial skills for future success.

In my written testimony, which I did submit, I included a link to the 21st century skills map for arts education. I also brought with me some copies in case you'd like to take a look.

The skills map was developed by the partnership between 21st Century Skills and released at a Capitol Hill briefing last fall by representatives from the partnership. These include the American Alliance for Theater and Education, Educational Theater Association, the National Art Education Association, our own parent group, MENC, which is now led by our own Dr. Scott Schuler, and the National Dance Education Organization.

This may provides educator-created examples of how the fine arts -- dance, music, theater, and visual and media arts -- can be fused with basic skills to create learning experiences that promote 21st century knowledge and skill acquisition.

I'm sure that you know there is a growing body of evidence gathered from research that tells us that quality arts education has a positive effect on achievement gap, especially in low income and urban school districts, on school attendance rates and graduation rates.

As educators, we are acutely aware of the economic realities we face, and we are aware of the balancing act that must occur to provide the best education possible for our

students. We understand that this Committee would consider a delay in implementing the policy, a policy which may result in budgetary challenges to towns and cities who have not seen the writing on the wall yet and not implemented an arts credit in their graduation.

But, we must continue to push for excellence in our schools --

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you.

KIM YANNON: -- and excellence includes quality arts education experiences --

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you very much.

KIM YANNON: -- for all our children. Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you for your very extensive testimony and for reminding us how important music is and a variety of other arts programs.

Questions? Representative Johnson?

REP. JOHNSON: Are you familiar with some of the priority district schools and the fact that they've had to cut back on their arts education programs?

KIM YANNON: I do know that there are school districts that have felt that that is necessary to cut back on arts education. The ironic thing is that the research shows that arts education that is included in especially those priority districts makes a difference in test scores, and especially in the achievement gap.

I realize that it's usually the first thing

that people look at when they need to make cuts, but I think we need a deeper understanding of the fact that -- you know, as I was listening to the testimony about students with special needs -- I've been an educator for 26 years. It is my experience that children with special needs, children who face social and academic interventions right now, sometimes function the best in arts classes because arts classes allow them to use a different cognitive functioning than they would in a regular general ed class. They also allow them a sense of personal expression and freedom of expression that they do not get in a regular ed classroom, and I think that it is a huge mistake that we make when we look first at arts education. We should be implementing that more to help these kids.

REP. JOHNSON: How often do you think that they should in elementary school and then again in junior high and then in high school, how often should they have arts and music education?

KIM YANNON: I -- I do believe that probably contact time, increased contact time is more important at a younger age. I've also sat through testimony tonight talking about early reading skills.

There is research that shows that early reading skills are tied to singing and movement in early childhood education. Contact time probably needs to be increased to two or three times a week, really, would be optimal, and I know that there are standards set forth not only by the national standards, but also Connecticut standards that are not met by a lot of districts.

In terms of the older kids, it's not only the contact time, but it's the type of

instruction. We tend to focus music education on performing groups, and we're not reaching a lot of kids that would be interested in the arts if it weren't just about performing groups, if it included technology and composition, and those kinds of things, and people are getting smart to that. They are included those classes more and more.

That would also go to help the one credit in the fine arts as well.

REP. JOHNSON: Well, thank you for your testimony. My municipality provides it once a month for their kids.

KIM YANNON: Wow.

REP. JOHNSON: Thank you so much.

KIM YANNON: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Other questions? If not, does that bring us to Alex Johnston? Alex Johnston from ConnCAN to be followed by Ricky Tyrell, if she has still hung in there.

ALEX JOHNSTON: Good evening, Senator Stillman and Representative Fleischmann, members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

I'm going to speak about House Bill 6498, and really, coming before you to speak in opposition to a number of provisions in that bill that would delay the implementation of key reforms that were enacted last year. And, obviously, I think that all members of this Committee remember clearly the discussion around that bill, which is -- many people have thought of it as the Race To The Top bill, the bill that was enacted in order to try to make

the state more competitive in that competition.

And, in thinking of the bill in those terms, I think we do ourselves somewhat of a disservice because clearly the state did not win Race To The Top. That does not mean, however, that a number of key reforms in that bill were not good ideas to begin with, that ought to be pursued nevertheless.

And, it's also the case that while there would have been money attached had we won, a number of the reforms that were enacted as part of that bill are not major expenditures moving forward, and certainly I think we all have sympathy for the idea that there are unfunded mandates in this environment, but I would urge you to look carefully at the contents of the bill that was enacted last year, and really to identify that many of these things, you've heard a lot of testimony already about as being essential aspects of a broad reform plan, and further that money is either already appropriated or very little money is actually needed in order to implement, and just let me give you a few examples.

First of all, we really need a full and fast implementation of the state's data system. The Governor has actually put forward an appropriation request of \$2 million toward this end in his budget. There's already federal money from the Institute for Educational Sciences, and there's also likely philanthropic money to help support that.

And, we're going to be flying blind on all kinds of things if we don't make rapid progress in putting that data system together.

Likewise, we need to move ahead swiftly with

systems that can measure the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs. That's come up in testimony today as well, that one of the key aspects of that bill was, in fact, to create a linkage between teacher preparation programs and ultimately the classroom outcomes of their graduates, and as we've seen with the foundations of reading test, we know that not every teacher preparation program is actually preparing teachers equally well.

Likewise, we need to move swiftly with a state-wide teacher evaluation system, and there's been a lot of discussion lately about the impending layoffs that are coming and the fact that absent a more developed teacher evaluation system, we don't have as much data as we would like to ensure that we're targeting layoffs not simply across the board solely on the basis of seniority, but also on the basis of classroom effectiveness.

And, finally, we also need to move forward quickly with reforms that would allow the expansion of high-performing charter schools, not to roll back the clock as elements of this bill would do.

So, understanding that I might have hit the buzzer already, I'd just like to conclude by saying that there are two reasons -- if these weren't reasons enough -- to pursue these reforms, that these are part of an integrated, comprehensive strategy for closing our gap and raising performance for all students.

We also made assurances to the federal government in receiving our fiscal stabilization dollars, the 500-some million dollars, that we would implement our data system, and not just three years from now, but actually by this fall. We signed off on that

as a state as part of our receiving those funds, and likewise, keeping on track with these reforms is critical for being competitive for federal funding in the future, and there's a lot of discussion at the federal Department of Education right now about new pools of competitive funding, the teacher incentive fund, even Title Two, which is used for the professional development of teachers being awarded only to states that have an approach to measuring and evaluating teachers based on their effectiveness.

So, just in closing, if we look at where we ended up in the last round of federal competition, as we know, all of our neighboring states were successful, and they ended up pulling in hundreds of millions of dollars in many cases. When you look at that on a per pupil basis, Rhode Island, New York and Massachusetts all received between three and \$500 per student in competitive federal funding. At this point, we have received \$7.89 on a per pupil basis.

We can absolutely do much better than that, and there will be more federal funding that's awarded on this basis moving forward, and so it's very important that we keep on this track, understanding that some aspects of last year's reform are much more expensive than others, but the ones that I've just mentioned are -- can be implemented with very modest allocation of resources.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. I think it can go almost without saying that things are funded in the Governor's budget will probably not be delayed. This bill was drafted before there was complete certainty about what would be available, so there are dollars for data systems, I expect data systems to go forward.

Teacher evaluation, I expect that it will move forward and possibly accelerate.

But, you raised the question of expanding charter schools. There were no dollars for doing that in the Governor's budget beyond the grade by grade expansion that one would foresee, so where would you propose those dollars come from?

ALEX JOHNSTON: Well, I think what's clear in the language that was enacted last year was that it was an attempt to signal the removal of certain restrictions on the growth of charter schools. To really try to signal that the state has a more hospitable or -- the state is integrating the growth of charter schools into a larger strategy. In reality, the main barrier to the growth of charter schools I think, as we all know, is the way that we fund them and the fact that every seat is appropriated in a separate line item.

There's no proposal to change that. It was on the table in last year's legislation, but it sends the opposite signal to now be saying that changes that we made last year with the explicit argument, for example, that the state to -- the state board ought to be able to approve charters whether or not there are funds already identified, we know -- and I think this Committee has heard, certainly I believe the Appropriations Committee heard it in its budget hearing -- that there are a lot of folks who want to start new schools, who want the opportunity to file an application. They understand that they still have to make the case to have the funds appropriated, but not to even be able to put their plans together is really to restrict the opportunity to consider those plans, and likewise with the bond funding.

The language already says within available bond appropriation, so it doesn't seem to serve any purpose to change that language to push the date back.

I'm just -- I'm not sure where -- it seemed like sort of across the board there was a movement to just push every date in the bill back, and I would urge a more close consideration.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Duly noted. Other questions of -- Senator Stillman?

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you, sir. I would say that you're preaching to the choir. As members of the Education Committee, this was a very difficult bill, but it is reflective of our fiscal conditions. I do appreciate your pointing out some areas that maybe we could continue to move forward with, but as my Co-Chair will attest, I really didn't want to do this bill at all. I preferred to leave things alone, but we just don't have the resources for all of them, so we'll continue to look at it and, hopefully, come up with a better resolution.

ALEX JOHNSTON: Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you, sir.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Any other questions? If not, thank you for your testimony and your patience.

ALEX JOHNSTON: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Is Becky Tyrell still here? If not, is Dr. Vivian Cross still here?

Education Committee
March 7, 2011

TESTIMONY OF
GEORGE A. COLEMAN, ACTING COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

ON

RAISED BILLS 1102, 1103, 1105, 6498, 6499, 6500, 6501, 6502

RAISED BILL 1102: AN ACT CONCERNING AUTHORIZATION OF STATE GRANT COMMITMENTS FOR SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS AND CONCERNING CHANGES TO THE STATUTES CONCERNING SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS

The State Department of Education (CSDE) supports Raised Bill #1102, *AAC Authorization of State Grant Commitments for School Building Projects and Concerning Changes to the Statutes Concerning School Building Projects*, to authorize state grant commitments for school building projects and to establish the School Building Projects Advisory Council.

Section 1 of this bill contains the school construction priority list that CSDE submits annually to the General Assembly for approval.

Section 2 of this bill establishes a School Building Projects Advisory Council. Input from and discussion among agencies and industries involved with construction and state financing is extremely valuable for the school construction grant. The CSDE Bureau of School Facilities has been engaged with design professionals and construction managers and town and school business finance representatives for years on a more informal basis.

However, with that said, this advisory council conflicts with the Governor's bill outlining changes to school construction. That expertise would be provided by the new Department of Construction Services.

As such, CSDE supports Raised Bill # 1102.

RAISED BILL 1103: AN ACT CONCERNING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The State Department of Education (CSDE) strongly supports Raised Bill #1103, *AAC Early Childhood Education*, as it represents a number of the State Board of Education's Legislative proposals for this Legislative session.

Section 2 of this bill allows for the distribution of unallocated competitive school readiness funds to *any* eligible grantee that may serve additional children. Current law allows for the distribution of unallocated competitive school readiness funds to towns with two or more priority schools if they can provide additional spaces for children. The fifty poorest towns are also eligible to receive a competitive school readiness grant; however, they are currently ineligible to receive additional unallocated funds, even if they have the ability to serve more children. This change will allow more children to be served.

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existing known information and networks within the educational community and then incorporated into one set of guidelines for lead poisoning prevention and intervention.

As such, the CSDE supports Raised Bill #1105, with some concerns.

RAISED BILL 6498: AAC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The State Department of Education (CSDE) supports Raised Bill #6498, *AAC School Districts*, to delay the implementation of certain mandates in Public Act 10-111; and to create a task force to examine issues related to the changes in the high school graduation requirements, with some concerns.

Section 4 delays lifting the 85 per grade enrollment cap for high achieving charter schools adopted in the 2010 legislative session. Delaying this provision may have the unintended consequence of imposing further limitations on charter schools which want to significantly expand enrollments based on demand.

Section 6 delays bond authorizations for charter schools. In 2010, the Bond Commission provided \$2,529,154 in bond funds to charter schools. This total represents apportionment of the total \$5 million allocated. The Bond Commission has not acted to date on the remaining amount of \$2,470,846. Because more than half of the charter schools have historically submitted applications for this funding, and because requests for these grants have, to date, exceeded funds available by as much as 160 percent, we expect that there will be continued need for capital expense associated for the charters. Improving existing facilities and ensuring the health and safety for students is a priority and therefore CSDE does not support the delay in this provision.

CSDE supports the sections addressing the various aspects of Secondary School Reform by pushing out the date of implementation. CSDE believes it is crucial to move forward on Secondary School Reform in order for our students to be better equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary for success in further education and the workforce. However, CSDE also recognizes the fiscal burden this poses on the state and school districts and therefore supports the date changes.

For the sections pertaining to School Governance Council (SGC) reporting requirements, CSDE has additional suggestions to further streamline the SGC reporting requirements, while retaining the initial intent of the reporting requirements. CSDE will subsequently submit these suggested changes to the Chairs of the Education Committee.

RAISED BILL 6499: AAC MINOR REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES

The State Department of Education (CSDE) is in agreement with the concepts in Raised Bill #6499, *AAC Minor Revisions to the Education Statute*, with some concerns.

The CSDE has concerns with Section 4 of this bill as written.

The purpose of this section is noted to require the State Board of Education to adopt regulations that create a certification endorsement area in computer and information technology that allows computer and information technology teachers to teach in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive. However, the bill language itself doesn't indicate anything about certification regulations and a certification endorsement to

TESTIMONY OF THE
CONNECTICUT COALITION
FOR **JUSTICE**
IN EDUCATION FUNDING
TO THE
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

March 7, 2011

The Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Funding appreciates this opportunity to submit comments on the below raised bills:

SB 1103 — An Act Concerning Early Childhood Education

- **Sec. 1:** CCJEF recognizes the value and importance of high-quality school readiness programs for all Connecticut schoolchildren, and considers such programs as essential to educational adequacy and equity. Nevertheless, given the state's current underfunding of public education, CCJEF must reluctantly oppose the mandating of such programs, inasmuch as they would dramatically increase the educational funding burden on local school districts and their municipalities. In other words, requiring all public schools to maintain readiness programs would become still another costly unfunded mandate. (Please see today's written testimony of CCM concerning this bill, as it provides ample rationale for why this additional unfunded mandate is unreasonable at this time.) However, as school finance reform efforts move forward and the state's economy rebounds, CCJEF hopes that school readiness programs will indeed become an integral part of a revamped PK-12 education finance system.
- **Sec. 3 (lines 107-14):** CCJEF commends the proposed longitudinal evaluation of the school readiness program that would examine the educational progress of children from PK-grade 4. Aside from its obvious important uses for improving vital early childhood services and aligning curricula in the early grades to better meet the learning needs of incoming schoolchildren, such a study should also provide findings useful to school finance reform efforts.

HB 6498 — An Act Concerning School Districts

- **Sec. 1:** CCJEF does not support extending the deadline for expansion of the statewide public school information system beyond 2013. This data information system should have been in place years ago. A complete and fully operational system is now extremely urgent, in that the data contained therein will be essential in the close monitoring of an improved school finance system that aims to ensure education equity and adequacy for all schoolchildren and their schools.

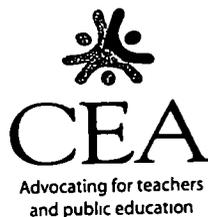
- Sec. 4-6: Since charters were first authorized in Connecticut in 1997 through last year (FY10), the state has invested over \$306.6 million in charter schools. They have received another \$31.7 million from federal sources. These are all taxpayer dollars that otherwise would have gone almost exclusively to urban school districts. And, of course, those same urban districts have been deprived of some of their highest-potential students and most activist parents due to the existence of these privately operated, independent schools. Before enabling further expansion of charter enrollments and committing increasing levels of state funding thereto, CCJEF urges that the Education Committee include in this final bill a provision to require the State Department of Education to commission a comprehensive programmatic and fiscal evaluation of charter schools. Without such a detailed examination by an outside non-charter affiliated research organization, school finance reforms aimed at incorporating choice programs like charters into a formula that resembles the ECS cannot be justified, as far too little of their operations, cost structures, or sustained learning outcomes of their students is known.
- Sec. 9-16: CCJEF supports the extension of these high school reform deadlines, in light of the severe fiscal constraints on both state and local budgets.

HB 6500 — An Act Concerning Educational Achievement.

- Sec. 3: CCJEF strongly supports an updated and uniform system of accounting for school revenues and expenditures, one that includes mandatory use of a school-level chart of accounts by local and regional boards of education, regional educational service centers, the regional vocational-technical high school system, and all charter schools. The aim of such accounting improvements should be to provide better information for policymakers but also to enhance budget transparency for the public.

Special care should be taken to align the improved accounting procedures with best practices nationally that have been underway for the past decade or so. Some consideration should also be given to drilling down to the program level — perhaps as a pilot within a voluntary cross-section of a dozen or so school districts — with an eye to more finely capturing data for cost-effectiveness research and aiding other such studies that can help maximize student learning and stretch precious education dollars. For example, program-level data would facilitate an examination of the payback on certain prevention versus remediation strategies, and help ascertain which instructional approaches (e.g., reading or math programs) or intervention programs (e.g., dropout or pregnancy prevention) work best in which circumstances and at what investment level.

Nevertheless, such accounting system improvements invite misinterpretation, flawed apples-to-oranges comparisons that fuel partisan purposes, and other data misuses. Such is to be expected as an unfortunate outcome of improved budget transparency. Another unfortunate implication of proposed accounting system improvements will be the additional workload required of already thinly staffed school budget offices, and in that regard, this would be still another unfunded mandate.



**Connecticut Education
Association**

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National Education
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Testimony of

**Mary Loftus Levine, Director of Policy and Professional Practice
Connecticut Education Association**

Before the

Education Committee

**Re: S.B. No. 1104 "An Act Concerning Charter Schools"
and**

H.B. No. 6498 "An Act Concerning School Districts"

March 7, 2011

Good afternoon, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee. I am Mary Loftus Levine, Director of Policy and Professional Practice for the Connecticut Education Association, representing 40,000 educators in our strong public schools.

The State Department of Education has spent well over four years developing, vetting, and issuing new educator certification regulations. These regulations are currently being re-examined by the department, per the suggestion of the Attorney General's office. Educator stakeholder groups, including CEA, were actively involved in this lengthy and sometimes contentious process.

But the one absolute we all support is having higher qualified and properly certified teachers in our classrooms. These new regulations raise standards, requiring the latest extensive coursework and practice to assure not only that each teacher has content knowledge, but also understands and actually knows how to deliver highly qualified instruction.

As educators, we oppose waiving the requirements that S.B. No. 1106 attempts to accomplish. Charter schools were granted lower standards, waiver language, and new alternate routes to certification which just took effect July, 1. When and where does this end? SB 1104

On behalf of one of our most vulnerable populations of students which charter schools currently serve, we ask that you stand up for equity and the high standards you demand of our public schools educators for all children, and reject this latest proposal in favor of good public policy.

H B. No. 6498 also attempts to undo the new charter school language passed in June. We oppose Section 4(c) In this time of fiscal austerity and a possible change in the school funding formula, now is not the time to change the policy that has hardly had a chance to work. Research clearly shows that charters perform on the average no better than public schools; we need to invest in great public schools for all children

We also oppose Section 5(d) (2) and (3) of section 10-66dd for the same reasons as we oppose allowing uncertified people teach our children. As of July1, charter school teachers had to become members of our Teacher Retirement system. This means they too had to hold a certification to teach. Once again, you are being asked to lower standards and create another waiver by moving the date out two more years. We oppose such a two class system. Everyone should not only be properly certified but pay their fair share. Thank you.

Connecticut Commission On Educational Achievement



Shana Kennedy-Salchow
Co-Executive Director
Connecticut Commission on Educational Achievement
Education Committee Public Hearing Testimony on Raised Bills 1106, 6500, and 6498
3/07/11

- My name is Shana Kennedy-Salchow. I want to thank the members of the Education Committee for this opportunity to testify about Raised Bill 1106.
- I served as co-Executive Director of the Connecticut Commission on Educational Achievement, a bi-partisan group of 11 business and philanthropic leaders appointed by former Governor Rell to make recommendations for closing CT's widest in the nation achievement gap.
- Over the course of the Commission, we constantly heard about the importance of early childhood education opportunities in closing the achievement gap- that so many students were showing up at school without the skills they needed to be successful.
- We looked into the issue and found that Early Childhood education existed across several different state agencies and when asked some of the most basic questions, such as, how many low-income kids need access to PK- you could get several different answers. The same was true of quality questions such as – does the teacher have to have an AA? What percent of them do?
- The Commission endorses the establishment of the early childhood education department. We are confident this will bring the efficiency and will allow for both quality control and a quality ratings system that will be beneficial to little students, their parents and the state.
- I would also like to comment on Raised Bill 6500, An Act Concerning Educational Achievement. We are excited to see the requirement of a math assessment for elementary school teacher candidates. As you may know, the state's reading assessment has shed light on the wide range of performance of teacher candidates from our education schools, with several of our largest education schools performing poorly. We look forward to a math component and see both assessments as tools that schools of education can use to ensure they are producing well-prepared teachers.
- Additionally, we fully support section 3 of Raised Bill 6500 - the adoption of a Common Chart of Accounts. During the Commission, we tried desperately to understand how

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Connecticut Commission On Educational Achievement



schools were funded and what the money actually went for. None of the information we needed was available at the school level and the information at the district level varied so much and had such broad categories, it was nearly useless.

- Research in other states has shown us the tremendous variance in school-level funding with-in districts. It has also shown that the schools serving our low-income students are most-likely to receive less funding because of this system of masked funding.
- Last, I would like to comment on Raised Bill 6498. The Commission feels strongly that the reforms in PA 10.111 need to be initiated as soon as possible, we cannot delay the main provisions in this act. In fact, we found some of the deadlines to be too generous as currently written (such as the data system deadline or the teacher evaluation report from the Performance Evaluation Advisory Committee). With an estimated 45,000 students at the below basic level in reading and/or math, can we really afford to wait? Furthermore, there are 20 states and DC now with college and career ready graduation requirements for all of their students yet this bill proposes waiting even longer before we have the same high expectations for our students. PA 10.111 was a step in the right direction we don't need to go backwards.

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10-25

TESTIMONY OF
LOUIS BACH
CONNECTICUT BUSINESS & INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
BEFORE THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
MONDAY, MARCH 7TH 2011

Good afternoon Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Louis Bach and I am testifying on behalf of the Connecticut Business and Industry Association. CBIA's 10,000 member companies represent the broad diversity of private enterprise in the state, and our membership is overwhelmingly comprised of small businesses with fewer than 50 employees.

The business community has a vested interest in a quality education for all Connecticut students. The success of our members depends in part on their ability to hire well-educated graduates who are prepared to meet the workforce demands of a global 21st century economy. For this reason CBIA is pleased to support the following proposals being considered today:

SB 1106 AAC THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EARLY EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

The proposed Department of Early Education and Child Development is central to establishing effective state leadership in the drive to reform our schools. We recognize that the debate surrounding the organizational consolidation proposed by this legislation will take time to conclude. It is important for the different components currently delivering services to our children to build a relationship of trust, respect, and understanding during this process. Thank you for raising this issue.

HB 6500

HB 6500 AAC EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

CBIA fully supports the requirement that those seeking an elementary-level teaching certificate shall pass an "approved mathematics assessment in order to be eligible for such elementary education endorsement." This measure takes long strides towards the goal of ensuring that our new teachers are ready to serve the needs of the state's schoolchildren. Additionally, the development of a uniform system of accounting for school expenditures invokes practices our members employ every day in Connecticut's private sector businesses, which rank among the Nation's most efficient. We feel that a Common Chart of Accounts will serve to correct the murky condition of accounting at the school level, better enabling the public and lawmakers to

“follow the dollars” and keep abreast of how our education investments are being applied. This measure is a key first step to reforming school finance and we thank you for raising it.

CBIA opposes the following measure:

HB 6498 AAC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Because the scheduled reforms that this measure would postpone were critically needed when they were passed, we feel that a further delay in their implementation would set Connecticut at an increasing disadvantage compared to other states and harm the future prospects of a large number of children. Many tens of thousands of Connecticut’s schoolchildren already score below basically proficient in reading and math. PA 10.111 was duly enacted to address this serious problem; we cannot afford to delay implementation any longer. We respectfully oppose this measure.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today. I would be happy to answer any questions that I can.

22-24



Alex Johnston
Testimony on House Bill No. 6498

ConnCAN strongly opposes the provisions of House Bill Number 6498 that propose to delay key reforms that are absolutely critical to improving schools in Connecticut. Specifically, this bill proposes a two-year delay to implementation of the state data and teacher evaluation systems that were passed by the General Assembly last year in Public Act 10-111 (delayed from 2013 until 2015).

House Bill 6498 would delay fundamental reforms needed to improve our schools. In particular, this bill would delay:

1) *Full implementation of a state data system* to track and report on student, teacher and school, and district performance growth data and make that information available for use in evaluating teacher and student performance and growth. Such a statewide data system is absolutely fundamental to school improvement and accountability efforts, yet Connecticut lags well behind many states in this regard.¹ Without this system, too many parents, teachers, principals, districts, and state leaders lack the kind of data they need in order to know what's working, what's not, and how to fix it. For example, our current data systems do not allow us to match student-level Pk-12 and higher education data to track matters like college enrollment, remediation rates, college graduation rates, etc. Our state has already begun to develop and pilot some components of these systems, and we need to accelerate, not delay, this work.

2) *Systems to measure the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs.* We know that too many teacher preparation programs are not turning out graduates who are prepared to deliver an excellent education to students. Recent test results show that nearly one in every three graduates from Connecticut's teacher preparation programs does not know how to teach children how to read.² In some programs, nearly 50 percent of prospective teachers failed a test of teaching reading skills that became part of the teacher certification process in 2009.³ Last year's Public Act 10-111 required, for the first time, the state to create a data system that links students to their teachers and teachers to their training programs. We cannot delay implementation of this system that will be critical to ensuring that graduates of teacher training programs are prepared to take on the challenges of the job.

¹ For example, see <http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/stateanalysis/states/CT/>

² <http://ctmirror.com/story/7654/exam-trips-prospective-teachers-90810>

³ <http://www.conncan.org/sites/default/files/research/StateOfCTPubEd2009-Web.pdf>

3) *A statewide teacher evaluation system.* With the exception of New Haven's nationally recognized teacher evaluation plan, Connecticut's current teacher evaluation systems are woefully inadequate. In their annual review of state teacher policies, the National Center for Teacher Quality gave Connecticut a 'D+', placing our state far behind the nation's leaders on making sure every child has access to a great teacher.⁴ Without an evaluation system that will provide meaningful data, feedback, and support to all teachers, we cannot formally recognize effective educators, help those who are struggling, or remove those who are consistently underperforming. It is precisely because of our lack of a functional teacher evaluation system that we find ourselves in the devastating situation of having to rely on seniority in the thousands of teacher layoffs that will happen this year. In the short term, we need to give districts the flexibility to use more than just seniority when making layoff decisions this year. Common sense dictates that factors such as specialized training, student performance, teacher observations, and peer review should be considered before teachers are laid off. In the long term, we need a statewide educator evaluation system that allows us to measure a teacher's effectiveness and use that information in a range of staffing decisions. With no end in sight to our budget woes, we cannot delay implementation of a strong statewide teacher evaluation system.

Connecticut is already obligated to implement many of these reforms by 2011. Delaying their implementation will put us out of compliance.

Last year, Connecticut received about \$541 million under the federal State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) that were intended to help stabilize State and local government budgets in order to minimize and avoid reductions in education and other essential public services. Our state has already distributed those funds to districts. To qualify for these funds, the State was required implement a number of education reform initiatives by September 30, 2011, including:

- Maintaining our state-wide student identifier for pre-k through postsecondary, linking teachers to students, and the capacity to communicate with our higher education system; and
- Providing student achievement growth data to teachers of reading/language arts and mathematics and provide those teachers with reports of individual teacher impact on student achievement on state assessments.⁵

Connecticut has already lost opportunities for millions in federal education funds. House Bill 6498 jeopardizes our chances at future funding.

During the last two years, approximately \$5.3 billion of competitive education grants have been awarded to states as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The grants were split into six different efforts:

⁴ <http://www.nctq.org/stpy09/updates/connecticut.jsp>

⁵ http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/arra/sfsf_required_activities.pdf

1. Race to the Top (76.75%)
2. Investing in Innovation (12.01%)
3. Teacher Incentive Fund (3.62%)
4. Data Systems (4.65%)
5. Teacher Quality Partnerships (1.86%)
6. Impact Aid (1.11%)

Connecticut ranked **38th out of all states** in overall dollars won with a total of \$4,473,481. This amounts to \$7.89 per pupil.⁶ Meanwhile, our neighboring states won billions in federal funding. For example, Rhode Island received over 65 times the funding per pupil that Connecticut won.

Table 1. Connecticut Competitive Federal Funds Won Compared to Neighboring States

State	Total	Rank	Per Pupil	Rank
Rhode Island	\$75,000,000	13 th	\$516.02	4 th
Massachusetts	\$310,588,393	8 th	\$323.90	8 th
New York	\$845,659,232	2 nd	\$308.54	9 th
Connecticut	\$4,473,481	38th	\$7.89	38th

What set these states apart from Connecticut? Strong data and teacher evaluation systems that:

- Use student achievement growth as a significant factor
- Help teachers identify areas of excellence and areas that need improvement, and center professional development around those results
- Can be used to inform critical staffing decisions: hiring, tenure, promotion, termination, and compensation.⁷

Oppose House Bill 6498

Connecticut is home to the largest achievement gap in the nation, and even our top performing students are falling behind.⁸ In the meantime, states like Massachusetts and Florida are making significant progress to close achievement gaps and raise overall achievement.⁹ These states are also winning billions in federal funding while Connecticut gets left in a state of perpetual mediocrity. We can reverse this course, but we must prioritize essential reforms, rather than delay them as proposed in House Bill 6498.

⁶ Education Week, Competitive Stimulus Grants: Winners and Losers
http://www.edweek.org/ew/section/infographics/stimulus_competitive.html

⁷ NY Summary - <http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/application/summary.html>, MA Summary - http://www.mass.gov/Eeoe/docs/arra/race2top_phase2_exec_summary.pdf, RI Summary - <http://www.ride.ri.gov/commissioner/RaceToTheTop/docs/1-pager.pdf>

⁸ National Center for Education Statistics, Hanushek, Petersen, and Woessmann. "U S Math Performance in Global Perspective " <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/pepg/PDF/Papers/PEPG10->

⁹ National Center for Education Statistics

22-13

Testimony for Education Committee Hearing on AAC School Districts, HB 6498
March 7, 2011

Representatives Fleischmann and McCrory and members of the Education Committee

My name is Kim Yannon and I am a music educator in Cheshire, a doctoral candidate at the University of Hartford and President of Connecticut Music Educators Association. I am here to speak, on behalf of our membership and students, to HB 6498, specifically the proposal to repeal Section 7, subsection (c) of the general statutes concerning the implementation of the high school reform requirements for graduation and the proposed delay for said implementation until 2020. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those on this committee responsible for recognizing the importance of arts education in creating informed, capable, 21st Century thinkers who are prepared for the challenges of higher education and the modern work force and for creating a high school reform matrix which includes a dedicated one-credit requirement in the fine arts.

To quote Daniel Pink from his book *A Whole New Mind*, "The last few decades have belonged to a certain kind of person with a certain kind of mind – computer programmers who could crank code, lawyers who could craft contracts, MBA's who could crunch numbers. But the keys to the kingdom are changing hands. The future belongs to a very different kind of person with a very different kind of mind – creators and empathizers, pattern recognizers and meaning makers. These people – artists, inventors, designers, storytellers, caregivers, consolers, big picture thinkers – will now reap society's richest rewards and share its greatest joys" Those of us in education and those of us responsible for steering education policy at the state level must be informed as to the role arts education plays in our students' development and the unique position arts education is in to deliver instruction in these 21st Century Skills. Creativity, big-picture thinking, pattern recognition, meaning making are all hallmarks of arts education and are now widely recognized as crucial skills for future success.

I am including a link in my written testimony to the 21st Century Skills Map for Arts Education (<http://www.menc.org/news/view/press-release-p21-and-arts-associations-release-21st-century-skills-map>) developed by The Partnership for 21st Century Skills and released at a Capitol Hill briefing by representatives from P21. These include the American Alliance for Theatre & Education, the Educational Theatre Association, the National Art Education Association, MENC: The National Association for Music Education, the National Dance Association, and the National Dance Education Organization. The map provides educator-created examples of how the fine arts (dance, music, theatre, and visual and media arts) can be fused with basic skills to create engaging learning experiences that promote 21st century knowledge and skill acquisition. I urge the members of the committee to access the link and peruse the map.

There is a growing body of evidence gathered from research that tells us that quality arts education has a positive effect on the achievement gap, especially in low income and urban school districts, on school attendance rates, graduation rates, standardized test

scores and overall achievement in school. We know this, and that is why the legislature passed high school reform including a one credit requirement in the fine arts. It is also why the state university system will require one credit in the arts for admission starting in 2015.

All educators are acutely aware of the economic realities we face: we are homeowners, tuition-payers, food and fuel consumers as well as public employees. We are also aware of the balancing act that must occur to provide the best education possible for our students, our future, while maintaining budgets and enduring shortfalls and deficits. It is understandable that this committee would consider a delay in implementing a policy which may result in budgetary challenges to the towns and cities who have not already seen the writing on the wall and implemented an arts requirement in their high schools. However, I implore you to continue your support of the high school reform matrix including a one credit arts requirement and to not lose sight of what is important for our students. This legislation was incredible example of foresight, resolve and leadership and a demonstration of public policy which is informed by a combination of research and common sense. We must continue to push for excellence in our schools, and excellence includes quality arts education experiences for all children.

May I conclude by inviting all of you to join the membership of CMEA at our In Service Conference VIP reception to be held on Friday, April 8 at the Connecticut Convention Center. I will follow up with both an email and written invitation. We would love to show you what we do every day for the students in Connecticut.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Yannon

30 Coachlight Circle

Prospect, CT 06712

Teacher, Cheshire Public Schools

President, Connecticut Music Educators Association



Testimony by Acting Chancellor Louise H. Feroe
 Connecticut State University System
 Before the Education Committee
 March 7, 2011

Good afternoon, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee. I am Louise Feroe, Acting Chancellor of the Connecticut State University System (CSUS) and I regret that I am unable to appear before you today. I do, however, wish to submit comments regarding House Bill 6498, An Act Concerning School Districts.

In recent years, the Connecticut State University System has applauded the efforts of this Committee in tackling what is perhaps the most critical issue of our time – assuring that our students have the education they will need to succeed. This is an effort we have already joined wholeheartedly, and we stand ready to work with you to accomplish important objectives for our students and our state.

The sections of this bill that address graduation requirements, however, remind me of the concept of “justice delayed is justice denied.” In this case, it is ‘tougher graduation requirements delayed, opportunity denied.’ Although I recognize the fiscal realities, I simply do not believe that Connecticut students, and Connecticut, can afford to delay.

You are very familiar with the need. That is what prompted your action to raise standards in each of the past two sessions. The need has not changed, and it has not diminished. We see that with every class of students that enter our universities. And as you know, 93 percent of our students are Connecticut students.

Connecticut is not alone. About two years ago, the national education organizations, *Achieve* and *The Ed Trust*, issued a report that raised serious questions and issued critical challenges. The report found that “America’s young people are being woefully underprepared for life after high school. While the importance of postsecondary education and training has never been greater, four of every 10 college students need to take remedial courses. Among African-American and Latino students, that number rises to six out of 10. And sadly, students who take remedial courses in college are much more likely to drop out. This preparation gap is taking a real toll on our high school graduates, and on our economy and society as a whole.”

That report concluded by pointing out that “There will be people who question whether or not students can rise to the occasion if standards are raised; some will dispute whether or not they need to be raised to begin with. There will be concerns about the K-12 system’s capacity to deliver the teaching, curriculum, and support necessary for students to meet the new standards. There will be questions about the state versus district role in areas such as graduation requirements and curriculum. And there will be challenges in getting K-12 and higher education to work together.”

But *The Ed Trust* has also highlighted some illuminating success stories and statistics, especially as you consider the bill before you. They found that when challenged with rigorous courses, even low achieving students, often in poor, urban districts not only do better, but thrive academically. The schools pursuing such strategies “provide a rich curriculum coupled with strong, focused instruction. They have high expectations for all students.”

They also discuss the need for alignment across the education continuum. They found that a challenging curriculum results in lower failure rates, even for the lowest achievers. They found that a rigorous high school curriculum greatly increases bachelor's degree completion for all students. In other words, if we work together, and set the bar high, we can make a difference for *all* students. That is a lesson that should not be lost on any of us.

It is an issue that we are addressing. For example, we are seeing solid results with our Bridges program, which specifically deals with college readiness and establishes academic connections between our universities and local high schools, as well as middle schools. Many of you are familiar with this initiative, which began at Western and is now being implemented at each of the universities, in response to specific local needs. For example, Western, working with Danbury and Bethel since 2005, saw a reduction of 53% in participating students requiring remediation in math and a reduction of 90% in those students requiring remediation in writing – in just a few years.

But our universities, and colleges and universities collectively, cannot right this ship alone, even with the collaboration of school districts and individual schools that are more than willing to help.

This needs to be done across the board, across the state. This committee recognized that when it set 2018 as the target date. The Board of Trustees of the Connecticut State University System recognized that when they set 2015 as the date for new, strengthened admission standards to take effect for our four universities – Central, Eastern, Southern and Western. That schedule has not changed.

In fact, we have already begun sharing those new requirements with school districts and guidance counselors throughout Connecticut. And we have begun to see some school districts, cognizant of the fact that change is coming, begin to revise their graduation requirements consistent with our new admission standards, and the anticipated new state requirements.

Delaying the effective date may serve to slow that process, and let another year, or two, of students slip by without having the necessary level of college readiness. I don't believe that is a signal we ought to be sending. And I do not believe it is in Connecticut's long-term best interest. We recognize that local districts cannot make these changes overnight. Our new admissions standards were approved in such a way as to allow them time to revise course offerings and graduation requirements as necessary. And we look forward to working with them to achieve these goals. In fact, just last week, we worked with a teacher in Enfield who had some specific questions regarding our requirements in Mathematics.

Numerous national studies underscore that the most important factor ensuring that students are academically successful in college is the quality and intensity of the high school curriculum, and even academic work before high school. Satisfactory completion of an array of rigorous courses taken in an appropriate sequence is by far the most determining factor for admission, persistence and completion of a college degree. Educational systems across the nation are addressing these issues, and Connecticut would delay at its own peril.

I am certainly well aware of the budgetary pressures faced by local schools, and local municipalities, but as an educator, I am also aware of this: when students are ready for college level work from day one, we are not only helping them succeed academically but financially, saving them money by reducing the need for remedial classes, improving retention, and increasing our graduation rates. Most of all, we are preparing our students to succeed for a lifetime.

I hope that this information is helpful in your deliberations on this bill. Please contact Jill E. Ferraiolo if you have any questions or require any additional information regarding this matter.



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Written Testimony for the Education Committee

By

Judith B. Greiman, President

March 7, 2011

On behalf of the member institutions of the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges (CCIC), I am submitting testimony to express concern over **Raised Bill 6498, AAC School Districts**, which seeks to delay by two years, until the class of 2020, the enhanced high school graduation requirements adopted last year through Public Act 10-111.

At a time when Connecticut continues to have the largest achievement gap in the country and more of its students are entering college in need of serious remediation than ever before, it seems counterintuitive for the state to further delay addressing these problems and continue the status quo in our public schools for another two years.

Young people tend to achieve what's expected of them. The problem is, we're just not asking enough. According to a recent poll, 88 percent of students said they would work harder if their schools demanded more of them, set higher standards and raised expectations. Connecticut must set high standards for our students, their schools and families and provide the tools necessary for success.

Other states have been bold in their responses to this challenge. Twenty states and the District of Columbia have established requirements that all high school graduates must complete a college- and career ready curriculum. Five other states, including Massachusetts and New York, have outlined new graduation requirements to establish new rigorous high school requirements at the college- and career ready level. Connecticut, known for its highly educated workforce, will only continue to lag behind other states if this bill is adopted and the new requirements are delayed another two years.

Albertus Magnus College, Connecticut College, Fairfield University, Goodwin College,
Mitchell College, Quinnipiac University, Rensselaer at Hartford, Sacred Heart University, Saint Joseph College, St. Vincent's College,
Trinity College, University of Bridgeport, University of Hartford, University of New Haven, Wesleyan University, Yale University

**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**PLANNING AND
DEVELOPMENT
PART 5
1311 - 1562**

2011

March 21, 2011

28 mb/md/gbr PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT 11:00 A.M.
COMMITTEE

SENATOR CASSANO: Questions? Any committee members?

I think -- I know, as a committee, most of us share that concern. There are intentions to try to get some of these done now. We have to start somewhere. There are a lot of communication-type mandates and other type mandates that can be dealt with somewhat immediately. There are others that could provide quick relief and so I know that the committee is looking at these and hopefully that's step one. And I don't know how we define the study because you're correct, there have been multiple studies done in the past. If we focus on -- on serious elimination of these, then I think the committee will be worthwhile and that's what we're hoping. We'll move forward and I think we'll get some of these done this year.

JAMES FINLEY: Thank you, Senator. Thank you.

SENATOR CASSANO: Okay.

Mike.

MICHAEL GUARCO: Thank you to the chairs and to members of the committee for the opportunity to address Planning and Development. My name is Mike Guarco, a 30-year member of the board of finance in the town of Granby and it's chair for over 20. I, as well as a number of my fellow board chairs in upper Hartford County, am a founding member of the Connecticut Municipal Consortium for Fiscal Responsibility, a grassroots and bipartisan alliance of town councils and boards of selectmen, finance and education that believe far more focus needs to be placed on strengthening the hand of municipalities and

HB6411
SB990
SB989
SB452
HB6431
HB6498

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much money to go around and the cost of mandates chews into available funding at the local level raising costs and property taxes while diminishing both service and employment levels.

Among the bills worth of passage to provide immediate and significant relief are Senate Bill 990, which doubled the thresholds at which prevailing wage applies and, therefore, adds a cost -- the mandate which adds a cost -- a major premium in terms of property tax and cost on a project. Senate Bill 989, which protects a municipality's general fund from being considered in the ability to pay under binding arb; 452, requires a two-thirds vote in each chamber to create or expand a mandate on local governments; 6431, allowing flexibility regarding the education minimum budget requirement; House Bill 6498, delays some costly new education mandates.

And opposing a bill (inaudible) that's making the rounds, like the in-school suspension, adds costs and squeezes out other good programs within the schools is once again -- there is to some degree, especially these days, there's only so much to go around that we can raise in terms of local revenue in property tax.

Thank you.

SENATOR CASSANO: Thank you.

Any questions?

Seeing none, Mike. I appreciate you coming forward.

MICHAEL GUARCO: Thank you and good day.

**Testimony
Kathy Eagen
Town Manager
Town of Farmington
Before the Planning & Development Committee
March 21, 2011**

**RE: SUPPORT - HB-6411 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO
STUDY WAYS IN WHICH TO PROVIDE MUNICIPAL MANDATE RELIEF.**

I urge you to support HB-6411 which creates a mechanism for exploring opportunities to provide much-needed mandate relief to towns.

This has been a very difficult budget year, given that state aid is expected to be flat-funded once again and other sources of state aid are uncertain. Although we are making significant efforts to reduce costs, revenues have been flat or decreasing, putting us in the position of having to look for additional cuts or increase property taxes.

Unfortunately, state mandates, many of which are under-funded or unfunded, make it difficult to control costs in our budgets. I therefore support efforts to adopt the following mandate relief measures currently pending before the General Assembly:

Enacting a 2/3 Approval Requirement for Any Unfunded Mandate – Requiring any new unfunded mandates to be approved by a 2/3 vote of the General Assembly will ensure that lawmakers fully consider the cost implications associated with new mandates. Too often, the costs associated with a new mandate are not fully understood until the measure has been adopted.

Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR) - The Minimum Budget Requirements makes it difficult to achieve any real cost savings because state law mandates that school budgets cannot be reduced below previous year spending levels. Towns need more flexibility to ensure that if cost savings are achieved or enrollment has declined, these savings can be used to reduce the education budget.

New School Reform Mandates – While Public Act 10-111 was very well intentioned, it includes a number of costly mandates that we simply cannot afford at this time. We therefore appreciate support for HB-6498 which will delay implementation of the school reforms until federal or state funds are available to fund the programs

Eliminate the five-year statistical revaluation mandate - The state's statistical revaluation requirements have proven far more costly than anticipated. Towns should be permitted to delay or eliminate the statistical revaluation.

Binding Arbitration Reform – Towns need more control over local education budgets. Reforming the binding arbitration laws will help ensure that steep salary and benefit

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**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2011**

**VOL.54
PART 19
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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Necessary for Passage	74
Those voting Yea	147
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	4

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

The Bill as amended is passed.

(Deputy Speaker Ryan in the Chair.)

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Will the Clerk please call Calendar 215.

THE CLERK:

On Page 38, Calendar 215, Substitute for House Bill
Number 6498 AN ACT CONCERNING IMPLEMENTATION DATES FOR
SECONDARY SCHOOL REFORM. Favorable Report of the Committee
Appropriations.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Fleischmann of the 18th, Chairman of
the Education Committee. Please proceed, sir.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I say it's a pleasure to
see you up there despite the inclement weather.

I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable
Report and passage of the Bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

The question is on acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the Bill. Representative Fleischmann, you have the floor, despite the weather.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the measure that's now before us does precisely what the title describes. It pushes back by two years the implementation dates for the new secondary high school curriculum that we put into place last year.

It does so because we're in the midst of a fiscal crisis and very few school districts at this time feel that they're in a position fiscally to implement this new curriculum, and I heard from people on both sides of the aisle that this was a desired change.

The measure before us also would establish a Task Force to address implementation issues that may arise in the coming years so that we have more input from localities regarding how to address these enhanced graduation requirements.

Mr. Speaker, the Clerk is in possession of an Amendment, LCO 7992. I ask that the Clerk please call and that I be given permission to summarize.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

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Will the Clerk please call LCO 7992, which will be designated House Amendment Schedule "A".

THE CLERK:

LCO Number 7992, House "A", offered by Representatives Fleischmann, Giuliano, Senators Stillman and Boucher.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

The Representative seeks leave of the Chamber for summarization. Is there objection to summarization? Is there objection? Hearing none, Representative Fleischmann, you may proceed with summarization.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Amendment before us does essentially two things.

First, it addresses the fact that we do not have federal funds available to provide grants to districts, but we do have \$250,000 in each year of the biennium available to the State Department of Education to offer technical assistance to districts.

So this Amendment makes it possible for any district that's interested in secondary school reform, to go ahead and move forward with technical assistance from the state. They may do so, but they're clearly not required to do so.

Secondarily, the Amendment before us addresses an oversight in last year's Bill. We set up some school

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governance councils that have involvement of parents and teachers in schools in need of turn around.

We failed to recognize that academies that have only a single grade in attendance and that schools that already have something akin to a school governance council really should be exempted from the requirement to create a new council.

So this Amendment addresses all those issue. I move adoption.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

The question before the Chamber is adoption of House Amendment Schedule "A". Will you remark on the Amendment? Will you remark on the Amendment?

If not, I will try your minds. All those in favor signify by saying Aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Opposed, Nay. The Ayes have it. The Amendment is adopted.

Will you remark further on the Bill as amended? Will you remark further on the Bill as amended?

Representative Fritz of the 90th.

REP. FRITZ (90th):

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Good evening, Mr. Speaker. Through you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to pose a couple of questions to the Chairman of the Education Committee.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Please proceed, ma'am.

REP. FRITZ (90th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, is it not true, Representative Fleischmann, that in point of fact every community in the state who has, is involved in secondary education, can in fact put into place high school graduation credits beyond the established 20 credits that are on the books right now?

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes, indeed. Any locality may choose to go above and beyond the minimum requirements set in statute in this area of law and in many others.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Fritz.

REP. FRITZ (90th):

Thank you, Mr. Fleischmann, Representative Fleischmann. Then I guess I really have to question why in

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fact we need this law, because I know for a fact as the person back in 1983 who established graduation, high school graduation credits, which was only 18, and then Commissioner Tirazzi came and raised it to 20, then in point of fact, the Town of Wallingford already has 24 credits required for graduation, and they did it some time ago.

So if Wallingford can do it, I guess I have to question why anybody else can't do it, and why we need the law, and why we need to spend the money to teach them how to take care of their school system.

Could you answer that please, Mr. Chairman?

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Fleischmann, can you answer that.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I will do my best. Wallingford is in an enviable position to have 24 credits required for graduation. That is not the norm in the State of Connecticut. There are far more districts that are adhering to the statutory minimum than there are districts setting the bar as high as Wallingford does.

And in a fiscal environment where many education budgets are level or being cut, it is truly a challenge for

some districts to go ahead and ramp up their education requirements.

Now, without the Bill before us, they will be required to do it soon. The measure before us pushes back the implementation dates for secondary school reform by two years, while offering support to districts that wish to move sooner.

So it seemed to both Republicans and Democrats in the Education Committee that this struck the right balance.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Fritz.

REP. FRITZ (90th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I understand about pushing the reforms back by two years. I truly understand the economic climate and I guess I'm reaching for the fact that if one town can do it, and I'm sure other towns have done it as well, more than Wallingford, that I guess I have to ask you if that \$250,000 is an incentive for them to do it, or is it truly to be a guide?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, it is to provide technical support and guidance and let me give you an example of an area where even an enlightened community like Wallingford could benefit from this program.

There is required under the new curriculum that we've set into statute a capstone project for each senior in high school. Now, that capstone project is meant to be the culmination of a high school student's career. It's hopefully in an area of great interest to them.

Very few districts in the State of Connecticut have such a capstone project. It's going to be necessary for the State Department of Education to develop guidelines for those projects and help districts implement them. I'm sure that will be of assistance to many districts throughout the state. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Fritz.

REP. FRITZ (90th):

And through you, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the capstone project is the frosting on the cake. Having had a granddaughter who graduated a year ago from high school, who also was an AP student all the way through school and also went through all these AP classes. You cannot imagine

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how hard the students work at that level and at all the levels.

I think having them do a special project, if they're going to get credit for it, fine, but if it interferes with them getting college credits beyond the high school, through you, Mr. Speaker, I really don't think I can support this Bill. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Thank you, Representative Fritz. Representative Giuliano of the 23rd.

REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand and rise in support of the underlying Bill. I think that the reform implementation delays our extraordinarily necessary in our current fiscal crisis and circumstances.

I do, though, understand the comments of my colleague from Wallingford. There is nothing in either the Amendment or the underlying Bill that disallows local boards of education from exercising local control with regard to statutory minimums.

However, I would seek the support of the Chamber in this because the delay of the secondary school reforms that were so prominently promulgated by all of us just a Session ago need to occur at this point. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Thank you, Representative. Will you remark on the Bill as amended? Will you remark further on the Bill as amended? Representative Lavielle of the 143rd.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Good evening.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Good evening.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

I am, I stand very much in strong support of this Bill, and simply for purposes of information for the Chamber, I'd like to direct a question to the proponent if I may.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Please proceed, ma'am.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Through you, we have said already that this particular Bill delays for fiscal reasons some of the reforms that were introduced last year in the context of the competition for Race to the Top Fund, and I would simply like to ask the Chair of the Education Committee to describe briefly those that are not delayed, if I may. Thank you. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative, is this for legislative intent?

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Yes, it is.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Okay, thank you, Representative. Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For purposes of legislative intent, I think the simplest way to put it is this.

Sections of the measure that imposed a cost upon local education agencies were delayed.

Sections that involved absolutely no cost whatsoever were unaffected. That was the dividing line that we used for deciding whether or not to delay a given section of the Bill. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Thank you, Representative. Representative Lavielle.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And through you, I would just mention perhaps, and again just for confirmation, this really is for legislative intent and confirmation for the information of everyone in the Chamber that we are not affecting with this Bill a collection of longitudinal data and also certain measures related to teacher accountability

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and evaluation of performance related to student growth and development. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe that's correct. The statute that we are amending here includes a performance evaluation advisory council, and that council will remain in existence with its mandate to go ahead and provide the state with a model of how you evaluate both teachers and administrators in terms of the performance of students in a school. That will not be affected.

. Collection of data that we have been undertaking for years now will not be affected.

The creation of school governance councils that are intended to both help guide schools and turn around schools that are struggling will not be affected.

So, in short, I agree with the description that was offered and would say that those matters, and any others that can continue without any significant cost will remain in place. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Lavielle.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

I thank the gentleman for his answers, and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I found when we first discussed this Bill in the Education Committee, I again felt much reluctance to support it because the reforms that were introduced last year were, I felt were not only necessary in the context to the Race to the Top competition, but also because they were things we needed to do.

We have the largest achievement gap in the country in Connecticut. It is somewhat embarrassing. It has taken Connecticut from a high point in education where we used to be. We had one of the most competitive, most highly educated work forces and we're seeing that deteriorate, particularly in our cities.

And these reforms are a wonderful step in the direction of doing something about that.

I found myself able to vote for this Bill for a couple of reasons in the Education Committee and in Appropriations. One, because it did not delay everything, and as the good Chairman of Education said, it really focuses only on the costly measures, and those again are related to secondary education, which if we've got to fix something first, let's go for early education and middle school education. Let's get all that fixed, and there's a

lot of things in here designed to help us do that. Not in this Bill, but in the things that the Bill does not touch or address.

Secondly, when we are in the context of the financial situation in Connecticut and with the deficits we've been facing and with the highest increase in Connecticut, tax increase in Connecticut's history, it does make sense to delay the secondary school reforms for two years.

It's really something that, we're talking about \$14 million I believe one year and \$20 something million the second. So this is something we can do as long as we don't neglect the rest. We're not neglecting the rest. We're moving ahead, and I hope we'll continue to move ahead in this extremely crucial area of education reform and therefore, I strongly urge everyone in the Chamber to join me in supporting this Bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Thank you, Representative. Representative Hovey of the 112th.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you, a couple of questions to the proponent of the Bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

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Please proceed, ma'am.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Thank you, sir. Through you, Mr. Speaker, I'm just inquiring as to what the criteria is for the grant process for the technical assistance and whether, I looked here and I don't really see any specific criteria, and so if the good gentleman can answer that question for me, I'd appreciate it. Thank you, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to clarify. There is no grant process. Grants were associated with last year's Bill where we foresaw potential Race to the Top funding.

Here, what we've got is a State Department of Education that has funding to go ahead and provide technical assistance, and any local or regional school board that decides it is interested in moving forward with secondary school reform may contact the Department and receive assistance.

I expect that there will be economies of scale once the Department has developed the guidelines, for example, for capstone projects. Those guidelines will be helpful to any district that contacts the Department.

So, in short, all districts that show interest in moving forward will be offered assistance by the Department. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Hovey.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And Mr. Speaker, through you, might the Department encourage specific districts, communities, to request the technical assistance that might help us to move towards alleviating our achievement gap at that secondary level? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I think that is possible. We have the Connecticut Accountability and Learning Initiative, which has a number of our districts that are in greatest need of turnaround following district improvement plans.

And it is altogether logical that as part of those district improvement plans, some of those districts might be encouraged to seek out some of this technical assistance.

But the decision to go forward with secondary school reform or seek technical assistance will reside with the local board of education and will remain under local control. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Hovey.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his answer on that. I personally have a list of different areas that I would like to see encouraged to step up and do some of the things that have been in our legislation such as Wallingford has done, so to as improve their achievement levels.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, another question with regard to the school governance council and how that interfaces with our school boards.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would just explain. I think the public is having some questions about the separation of those roles or the integration of those roles, and if the gentleman would just explain that a little better. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, well first I want to make clear that this Bill really has very little impact on those councils that were established under Public Act 10-111 last year.

This Bill simply makes sure that if an academy has a single grade level it need not have a council, or if a school already has a governance council that's described in line 60 through 67, that it need not establish a new one.

That being said, I'll briefly say that a school governance council is really charged with helping turn around a school. It's not focused on a district as a whole. It has the power to make recommendations.

Final decision-making authority with regard to a school still resides with the local school board.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Thank you, Representative. Representative Hovey.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Thank you, sir, and I thank the gentleman for his answers. I think many of us are very happy to support this legislation. We've believed that our districts are moving forward with the implementation of appropriate education for all children and that the mandates were unnecessary and so I will be supporting this. Thank you, sir.

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DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Thank you, Representative. Will you remark further on the Bill as amended? Will you remark further on the Bill as amended?

If not, will staff and guests please come to the Well of the House. Will Members please take your seats. The machine will be opened.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by Roll Call.
Members to the Chamber.

The House is voting by Roll Call. Members to the Chamber.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Have all Members voted? Have all Members voted? Will the Members please check the board to determine if their vote has been properly cast.

If all Members have voted, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will take a tally. Will the Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

House Bill 6498 as amended by House "A".

Total Number Voting 148

Necessary for Passage 75

Those voting Yea 139

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Those voting Nay	9
Those absent and not voting	3

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

The Bill as amended passed.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar Number 87.

THE CLERK:

On Page 34, Calendar 87, Substitute for House Bill Number 6453 AN ACT CONCERNING GRANDPARENTS' VISITATION RIGHTS. Favorable Report of the Committee on Government Administration and Elections.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

Representative Fox of the 146th, Chairman of the Judiciary Committee.

REP. FOX (146th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move for the acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the Bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RYAN:

The question is acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the Bill. Will you remark?
Representative Fox.

REP. FOX (146th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Bill originally came from the Aging Committee and then it went on to the

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Thank you, Madam President.

Also, calendar page 28, Calendar 608, House
Bill Number 6284.

Move to place the item on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, moving to calendar page 30,
Calendar 615, House Bill Number 6485.

Madam President, move to place the item on the
Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Also, calendar page 30, Calendar 616, House
Bill Number 6498.

Madam President, move to place on the Consent
Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

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Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call's been ordered in the Senate on the Consent Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber. Immediate roll call's been ordered in the Senate on the Consent Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber.

THE CLERK:

Madam President, the items placed...

THE CHAIR:

I would ask the Chamber to be quiet please so we can hear the call of the Calendar for the Consent Calendar.

Thank you.

Please proceed, Mr. Clerk

THE CLERK:

Madam President, the items placed on the first Consent Calendar begin on calendar page 5, Calendar 336, House Bill 5697.

Calendar page 7, Calendar 421, Substitute for House Bill 6126.

Calendar page 8, Calendar 449, Senate Bill 1149.

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Calendar page 10, Calendar 470, Substitute for House Bill 5340. Calendar 474, Substitute for House Bill 6274. Calendar 476, House Bill 6635.

Calendar page 12, Calendar 499, Substitute for House Bill 6638. Calendar 500, House Bill 6614. Calendar 508, House Bill 6222.

Calendar page 13, Calendar 511, House Bill 6356. Calendar 512, Substitute for House Bill 6422. Calendar 514, House Bill 6590. Calendar 515, House Bill 6221. Calendar 516, House Bill 6455.

Calendar page 14, Calendar 517, House Bill 6350. Calendar 519, House Bill 5437. Calendar 522, House Bill 6303.

Calendar page 15, Calendar 523, Substitute for House Bill 6499. Calendar 524, House Bill 6490. Calendar 525, House Bill 5780. Calendar 526, House Bill 6513. Calendar 527, Substitute for House Bill 6532.

Calendar page 16, Calendar 528, House Bill 6561. Calendar 529, Substitute for House Bill 6312. Calendar 530, Substitute for House Bill 5032. Calendar 532, House Bill 6338.

Calendar page 17, Calendar 533, Substitute for House Bill 6325. Calendar 534, House Bill 6352.

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Calendar 536, House Bill 5300. Calendar 537, House
Bill 5482.

calendar page 18, Calendar 543, House Bill 6508.

Calendar 544, House Bill 6412. Calendar 546,
Substitute for House Bill 6538. Calendar 547,
Substitute for House Bill 6440. Calendar 548,
Substitute for House Bill 6471.

Calendar page 19, Calendar 550, Substitute for
House Bill 5802. Calendar 551, House Bill 6433.
Calendar 552, House Bill 6413. Calendar 553,
Substitute for House Bill 6227.

Calendar page 20, Calendar 554, Substitute for
House Bill 5415. Calendar 557, Substitute for House
Bill 6318. Calendar 558, Substitute for House Bill
6565.

Calendar page 21, Calendar 559, Substitute for
House Bill 6636.

Calendar page 22, Calendar 563, Substitute for
House Bill 6600. Calendar 564, Substitute for House
Bill 6598. Calendar 566, House Bill 5585.

Calendar page 23, Calendar 568, Substitute for
House Bill 6103. Calendar 570, Substitute for House
Bill 6336. Calendar 573, Substitute for House Bill
6434.

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Calendar page 24, Calendar 577, Substitute for
House Bill 5795.

Calendar page 25, Calendar 581, House Bill
6354.

Calendar page 26, Calendar 596, Substitute for
House Bill 6282. Calendar 598, Substitute for House
Bill 6629.

Calendar page 27, Calendar 600, House Bill
6314. Calendar 601, Substitute for House Bill 6529.
Calendar 602, Substitute for House Bill 6438.
Calendar 604, Substitute for House Bill 6639.

Calendar page 28, Calendar 605, Substitute for
House Bill 6526. Calendar 608, House Bill 6284.

Calendar page 30, Calendar number 615,
Substitute for House Bill 6485. Calendar 616,
Substitute for House Bill 6498.

Calendar page 31, Calendar 619, Substitute for
House Bill 6634. Calendar 627, Substitute for House
Bill 6596.

Calendar page 32, Calendar 629, House Bill
5634. Calendar 630, Substitute for House Bill 6631.
Calendar 631, Substitute for House Bill 6357.
Calendar 632, House Bill 6642.

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Calendar page 33, Calendar 634, Substitute for
House Bill 5431. Calendar 636, Substitute for
House, correction, House Bill 6100.

Page 34, Calendar 638, Substitute for House
Bill 6525.

Calendar page 48, Calendar 399, Substitute for
Senate Bill 1043.

Calendar page 49, Calendar 409, Substitute for
House Bill 6233. Calendar 412, House Bill 5178.
Calendar 422, Substitute for House Bill 6448.

Calendar page 52, Calendar 521, Substitute for
House Bill 6113.

Madam President, that completes the item placed
on the first Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

We call for another roll call vote. And the
machine will be open for Consent Calendar number 1.

THE CLERK:

The Senate is now voting by roll on the Consent
Calendar. Will all Senators please return to the
Chamber. The Senate is now voting by roll on the
Consent Calendar, will all Senators please return to
the Chamber.

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Senator Cassano, would you vote, please, sir.

Thank you.

Well, all members have voted. All members have voted. The machine will be closed, and Mr. Clerk, will you call the tally?

THE CLERK:

Motion is on option Consent Calendar Number 1.

Total Number Voting	36
Those voting Yea	36
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

Consent Calendar Number 1 has passed.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

We might stand at ease for just a moment as we prepare the next item..

THE CHAIR:

The Senate will stand at ease.

(Chamber at ease.)